

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR FY 2001-2005

Board of Supervisors' Public Hearing on the *Proposed Five-Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005 and the Proposed Consolidated Plan One-Year Action Plan for FY 2001* February 7, 2000

Three speakers addressed the Board at the public hearing, which was held at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Auditorium at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia. One of the speakers addressed both the Five-Year Plan and the One-Year Action Plan. Comments on the Proposed Five-Year Plan are summarized below, followed by a summary of additional written comments received during the public comment period. Comments on the One-Year Action Plan for FY 2001 are included in that document.

Shirley Marshall, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services

Acknowledged the enormous amount of data and critical thinking in the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005*. She noted that currently 9% of County households earn less than \$25,000; 10% of County households have family members with a disability; and apartment rents have doubled. A contradiction exists in that the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005* recommends that affordable housing opportunities should be scattered throughout the County, and accessible to employment, transportation, and services. The contradiction occurs because the combination of affordable and accessible housing is not found throughout the County. "Affordability" and "accessibility" lead households to areas where there are reasonable rents and good public transportation, which often leads households to the southern part of the County. Ms. Marshall stated that while the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005* identifies the need for affordable housing in the County, funding and political will are required to make affordable housing a reality in Fairfax County.

Response: The issues of the lack of affordable housing and the lack of adequate public transportation to facilitate access to housing, jobs, and services from all parts of the County are identified as major issues in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. Ms. Marshall's comments support the emphasis on these issues.

Ron Christian, Commissioner, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA)

Commended the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC) and County staff on the preparation of the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001– 2005* and the *Proposed Consolidated Plan One Year Action Plan for FY 2001*. The FCRHA recommends the inclusion of additional information in the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005* concerning homeownership assistance as well as three specific language changes to the Affordable Housing Goal. Mr. Christian stated that these recommendations from the FCRHA have been forwarded in a letter to the CCFAC. Mr. Christian also stated that as a member of

Faith Communities In Action, he commended the *Proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005* and the *Proposed Consolidated Plan One Year Action Plan for FY 2001* as humanitarian documents.

Response: The CCFAC recommendation to the Board of Supervisors includes the additional information requested by the FCRHA and the language changes to the Affordable Housing Goals and Objectives.

Mae O'Dell, for Jennifer Price, Chemical Sensitivities Disorders Association

Noted that there are Fairfax County residents who suffer from chemical sensitivities to commonly used products such as cleaning agents, pesticides and carpeting. Generally speaking the condition is sometimes referred to as environmental illness. Typically, persons with chemical sensitivities suffer from other chronic illnesses and tend to have limited incomes. Ms. O'Dell requested that future needs assessments and studies consider chemical sensitivities. She asked that the County set aside three emergency housing units for persons with environmental illness. Supervisor Gross asked Ms. O'Dell for an approximate number of persons that suffer from chemical sensitivity in this area. Ms. O'Dell stated that she was aware of approximately 70 people in the Washington area and about 7 people in Fairfax County.

Response: The CCFAC recommendation to the Board of Supervisors includes additional information as requested by Ms. O'Dell, and identifies the need for temporary emergency shelter as an issue for this population.

Additional Comments Received in Writing

Gregory Smith, Executive Director, Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Inc.

Mr. Smith provided several comments on the *Proposed Five-Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005*. He noted National Institute for Literacy estimates that 13% of Fairfax County's adult population (representing 83,375 residents) perform at the very lowest literacy level. He also suggested several points to include under gaps and priorities in the section of the plan addressing Education, Literacy, and ESL issues: (1) Current ESL programs are not meeting the demand for services -- the estimated collective waiting lists are more than 1,500 people; (2) adequate services to provide specialized reading instruction to developmentally disabled adults do not exist in Fairfax County; and (3) Lack of transportation and child care continue to remain significant barriers to accessing instructional services for many adults in Fairfax County.

Response: The CCFAC recommendation to the Board of Supervisors includes some of the additional information provided by the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Inc. and language changes to the Education, Literacy, and ESL section, under the Needs and Gaps and Priorities headings.

Sharon Kelso, Executive Director, United Community Ministries

Ms. Kelso offered several comments on the *Proposed Five-Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2001-2005*. United Community Ministries (UCM) supports the Affordable Housing Goals and Objectives. The loss of affordable housing units over the past several years is an area of concern that is taken very seriously. Ms. Kelso noted that UCM's microenterprise program was not mentioned in Section VI.C. This program has received funding from the County since 1991. In addition, Ms. Kelso identified a need for organizational capacity building as part of the Consolidated Community Funding Pool.

Response: The CCFAC recommendation to the Board of Supervisors includes a description of UCM's microenterprise program as part of the discussion about Current Programs and Strategies. Ms. Kelso's concern for organizational capacity building in addition to the training currently offered is something the County can consider in the future as part of the development processes for the One-Year Action plans.